

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4780

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AFM STANCE ON AZORES

SUMMARY: MOST RECENT OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE ARMED FORCES
MOVEMENT ANALYZES CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN AZORES
AND CRITICIZES UNIDENTIFIED ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PRESS, GOVERNMENT
AND THE AFM FOR THEIR ATTITUDE VIS-A-VIS THAT SITUATION. THIS
MAY INDICATE EXISTENCE OF SPLIT WITHIN AFM OVER HOW BEST TO
HANDLE CHALLENGE OF AZOREAN SEPARATISM. END SUMMARY.

1. THE AUGUST 14 EDITION OF MOVIMENTO, THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN
OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, CARRIED ON ANALYSIS OF CURRENT
POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE AZORES. HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW:

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2. IMPORTANCE OF THE AZORES TO REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS: LOSS OF AZORES WOULD "PUT THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS ITSELF IN QUESTION." INDEPENDENT AZORES WOULD "CERTAINLY" BE USED AS SPRINGBOARD BY REACTIONARY AND IMPERIALIST FORCES FOR ATTACK ON PORTUGAL. PORTUGAL, MOREOVER, HAS OBLIGATION TO ASSURE THAT THE THOUSANDS OF PORTUGUESE WORKERS IN AZORES SHARE IN BENEFITS OF REVOLUTION.

3. AZOREAN SITUATION INACCURATELY PERCEIVED: SOME ELEMENTS IN THE PORTUGUESE PRESS, GOVERNMENT, AND THE AFM HARBOR INACCURATE PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE AZORES. EITHER THEY UNDERESTIMATE THREAT POSED BY SEPARATISM OR THEY BELIEVE THAT SEPARATISTS ALREADY HAVE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF ISLANDS. THE FIRST PERCEPTION LEADS TO "DEMobilIZATION" OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THE SEPARATIST PROBLEM; THE SECOND EITHER TO CONCLUSION THAT ONLY REPRESSIVE MEANS CAN SAVE AZORES OR THAT THEY CANNOT BE SAVED AT ALL. SUCH ATTITUDES ARE "FUNDAMENTALLY INCORRECT."

4. "CORRECT" ANALYSIS: AZOREAN RURAL WORKING CLASS HAS BECOME DISCONTENTED DUE TO THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS'S FAILURE TO DEAL WITH ITS MOST PRESSING, PRIMARILY ECONOMIC, PROBLEMS. BY PLAYING UPON THIS DISCONTENT, AZOREAN PRIVILEGED CLASSES HAVE CONVINCED MANY WORKERS TO SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF AZOREAN INDEPENDENCE. UPPER CLASSES ARE MOTIVATED PRIMARILY BY DESIRE TO PRESERVE THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION IN THE ISLANDS. WITH SUPPRT OF WORKERS, THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS IN EITHER OF TWO WAYS. BY USING THREAT OF SECESSION TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE AUTONOMY FROM THE CONTINENT, THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO FRUSTRATE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE REFORMS IN ARCHIPELAGO. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, LISBON APPEARED DETERMINED TO FORCE REFORM IN THE AZORES, OUTRIGHT INDEPENDENCE COULD BE DECLARED. THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO USG OF LAJES FIELD AND THE EXISTENCE OF LARGE AZOREAN COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA RAISE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SEPARATISTS COULD COUNT ON INDIRECT AID FROM UNITED STATES FOR SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION.

5. SOLUTION: TWO ESSENTIAL STEPS MUST BE TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION IN THE AZORES. FIRST, IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE AZORES DO NOT CONSTITUTE "A REALITY WITH NATIONAL CHARACTER-
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ISTICS." SECOND, THE PRIMARY PROBLEMS OF THE AZOREAN WORKER MUST BE RESOLVED IN A REVOLUTIONARY MANNER.

6. COMMENT: "MOVIMENTO" IS PRODUCED BY THE 5TH DIVISION (PROPAGANDA AND CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION) OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF, AND OFTEN REFLECTS THAT UNIT'S LEFT-WING ORIENTATION. THE PEDAGOGIC TONE OF ITS ANALYSIS OF THE AZOREAN SITUATION AND ITS CRITICISM OF "INCORRECT" PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES APPEARS

TO INDICATE THE EXISTENCE OF A SPLIT WITHIN AFM OVER HOW BEST TO
HANDLE THE CHALLENGE OF AZOREAN SEPARATISM.
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